



# ALASKA People

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March/April 1999

## Visit the Denali Highway this Summer



Ed Boy

by K.J. Mushovic

Much of the land bordering the 136-mile Denali Highway between Paxson and Cantwell is public land managed by the BLM's Glennallen Field Office. The Denali Highway is a remote and challenging road that attracts thousands of Alaska residents and visitors each year for access to outstanding scenic, recreational, fishing and hunting opportunities. Presently, the GFO outdoor recreation staff is looking at ways to increase understanding of the area's special features and vulnerable ecosystems while enhancing travelers experiences.

Last fall, the GFO contracted with Bucy and Associates of Corvallis, Oregon to develop an interpretive plan for the highway corridor. Sites which lend themselves for interpretive opportunities, perhaps in the form of signs or exhibits, will be recommended.



Ed Boy

**The Denali Highway is occasionally used for special events, such as this 1992 Paxson-Cantwell bicycle race.**

The company spent the winter inventorying Denali Highway resources while considering management goals for the area. They helped develop interpretive plans for the Dalton Highway and will continue their Denali Highway inventory this summer.

"It's our job to help our visitors understand what's there," says Gene Ervine, BLM's lead interpretive specialist. "This highway bridges Denali National Park and Wrangell-St. Elias National Park to open up some of Alaska's most spectacular wilderness landscape to visitors."

BLM is also contracting for improvements to the Delta National Wild and Scenic River Wayside and Trailhead this summer, including the replacement of two outhouses and a well at the site, a favorite stop for travelers. Located at mile 21 of the highway, the wayside is just past BLM's Tangle Lakes Campground.

Meanwhile a team of BLM minerals specialists is revising and updating *Rocks, Ridges & Glaciers*, the 1991 BLM roadside guide to geologic and topographic features along the Denali Highway. The guide is popular with tourists and has been used by geology students. The revised edition should be available in the fall. **K.J. Mushovic is an outdoor recreation planner for the Glennallen Field Office.**



# What's Going on. . .

**Div of Lands, Minerals & Resources.** The resources staff is preparing to conduct an oil and gas lease sale for the northeast corner of the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska on May 5 at the Z.J. Loussac Public Library in Anchorage.

- The resources staff helped coordinate and staff an Alaska gold rush exhibit and gold panning station at the Great Alaska Sportsman Show at the Sullivan Arena in Anchorage from April 8-11. BLM's other exhibit space was home to an interagency exhibit on the 150th anniversary of the Department of Interior.

**Anchorage Field Office.** A scoping meeting was held with the Alaska Railroad March 10 on the railroad's proposal to realign and construct double tracks on approximately 10 miles of right-of-way on the Elmendorf Air Force Base and the Army's Fort Richardson. Environmental issues identified by the military, state and federal agencies include moose/train collisions, and impacts to wetlands and streams. A draft environmental assessment being prepared by Dames and Moore is scheduled for release in May.

**Glennallen Field Office** will arrange for clean up of an abandoned copper mine site near the Maclaren Glacier as part of BLM's efforts under the Clean Water Action Plan.

The **Juneau Mineral Information Center** has released a full color 18" x 24" poster highlighting Alaska minerals. The office worked with more than 25 mineral collectors and photographers from across the state. The specimens came from sites ranging from Ketchikan to Nome.

- The Juneau Mineral Center is developing a draft long range mineral assessment plan. It is seeking help from industry and others to help determine which federal lands should be studied for mineral potential. During the past 15 years, 10 mining district studies have been completed in Alaska by the U.S. Bureau of Mines and BLM. BLM mineral studies are currently underway in the Stikine and Koyukuk areas.

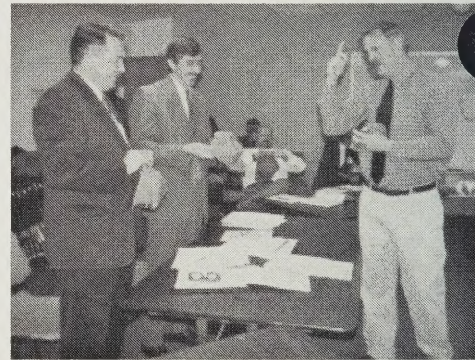
The **Northern Field Office** conducted two public hearings on the BLM's national proposed 3809 (surface mining) regulations in Fairbanks on March 30. About 70 people attended, and 28 people gave testimony. Most questions were about the need for changing the regulations and requests that the public comment period be extended until the completion of a congressionally-requested National Academy of Sciences study on the suitability of existing regulations.

The **Joint Pipeline Office** has entered into an agreement with Alyeska Pipeline Company to develop a Geographical Information System (GIS). The system is layered, providing the capability to view facilities, and environmental and oil spill information. The first phase of the system is complete. Phases two and three involve adding more information for broader use.

**Div. of Support Services.** Information Technology continues to inventory and test systems for Y2K compliance. Mission critical systems are priorities which include those supporting BLM's land records system, payroll and communications.

**Div of Conveyance Management.** In early April, Conveyances helped coordinate a week-long adjudicative decision writing class. Training and insight into Alaska issues were provided by instructors from the Phoenix Training Center, Nevada State Office, solicitors from DOI Washington and Alaska, and judges from the Interior Board of Land Appeals.

**Alaska Fire Service.** In preparation for the 1999 fire season, smokejumpers began practice jumps on April 14, even though snow remained in their landing zone. The first training session for emergency firefighter crews was held April 15 at St. Michael in the Galena Zone.



Cadastral Survey. **Gust Panos, (r)** branch chief of mapping and sciences explains the latest mapping technology to **Dr. Kostyantyn Yartsev** and **Dr. Oleksadr Kolodyazhnyy** from the Ukrainian Land and Resource Management Center. The Ukrainians visited the state office in February as part of a fact-finding trip to learn about the land survey process. Ukraine is undertaking an ambitious program to restore private land ownership to its citizens. The visitors got a look at the latest in survey equipment and digital technology as employees from Cadastral Survey and Conveyance Management patiently explained everything through a Ukrainian-American translator.



## Employee Profile

Bob Schneider started New Year's day 1999, with a sense of adventure, by boarding his family and their dog onto Alaska's northbound ferry. "I couldn't wait to get here and start working," Schneider said after his 2,000-mile move from Craig, Colo. "I have always wanted to visit Alaska and taking this job represented a chance to try new challenges while enjoying this wonderful state."

Schneider served as Associate District Manager in Craig for seven years. He has 23 years of experience in outdoor recreation planning, natural resources and supervision, working in the Craig Field Office; the Washington Office, Branch of Recreation and Cultural Resources; and in the Needles and El Centro resource areas in California.

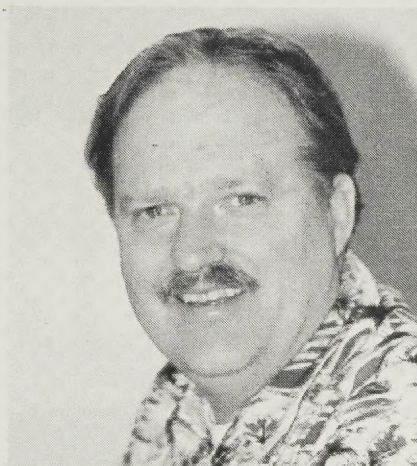
Before arriving in Alaska, the Schneider family visited the Fairbanks community via the Internet, researching schools and available activities and events. Daughter Jenny transferred to the University of Alaska Fairbanks as a second-semester freshman and son Nathan enrolled in West Valley High as a sophomore. Within a month, Schneider and his wife, Carolyn, purchased their new home. She earned cold-weather bragging rights by supervising the delivery of the family's household goods during a minus 53 degrees cold snap while Schneider attended the opening of the Inupiat Heritage Center in Barrow.

Since Schneider arrived in Alaska, he has traveled south to Tok and north to Barrow to meet with employees and BLM's external customers. In Fairbanks, he has joined the Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce and Kiwanis International.

**How long have you lived in Alaska?** Since January 6, 1999.

**What do you enjoy most about your job?** The challenge of living and working in Alaska. While the state has the same challenges as other places in BLM, here they are bigger, more controversial and subject to immense scrutiny. The staff here is great. They are very knowledgeable about the issues and they work well together. I like the whole package.

**What is the latest book you are**



Dan Guillidson

### Bob Schneider Northern Field Mgr.

**reading?** I like to read nonfiction. Right now I am wading through the *Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*. Hopefully, no one will draw any connections with my new job. I find history very interesting.

**What is your idea of a good time?** Being with family or sitting around playing music with buddies in Colorado. A campfire would be a nice touch.

**What was your favorite job?** My first job as an Outdoor Recreation Planner in El Centro, Calif., was probably the most fulfilling. In the late '70s and early '80s BLM was on the verge of breaking out in front of the pack in a lot of aspects of recreation management. It was a great time to test the waters and see what worked and what didn't. The sideboards were real wide.

**If you had one year to live, what would you do?** That's a tough one. Certainly I'd spend quality time with my family. If I had the time and money I'd like to spend six months getting personal guitar lessons from Jimmy Buffet at his place in Florida.

I'd also like to work with the Special Olympics; they're great to work with.

**Name one thing that people would be surprised to know about you.**

I have a secret desire to be an archaeologist — there, I said it. Seriously, before I arrived in Fairbanks I sent out a biographical sketch to help acquaint employees with what they were getting themselves into. I didn't leave much out.

**What does your "ultimate meal" consist of?** A Mexican style meal of enchiladas, carne-asada, and chili rellenos. Wash it down with any brand of good beer and finish it off with a big bowl of chocolate ice cream. This is a carryover from my grad school days at the University of Arizona in Tucson.

**What habit would you like to break?** Looking at me you wouldn't think I used to be physically active (I played baseball in college). I'd like to make a dent in my "couch potato" life style.

**What is your favorite place?** The hot springs in Saline Valley, California. The springs are located in Death Valley National Park. To sit back in the hot springs with something cool to drink, have pleasant conversation with others and to look up at the stars in the winter sky is heaven!

**What is the most important thing you've learned since working for the BLM?** There is no formula for success, only a formula for failure. That formula is trying to please everyone. Early in my career I was driven to try to make everyone happy. Out of frustration and years of experience I have learned this is not possible. You try to make the best decision you can and then move on. I still like the challenge, but I don't let it get me down.





Marilyn Heiman (l), the newly-appointed Spec. Asst. to the Secretary of the Interior, was master of ceremonies for the celebration held at the Campbell Creek Science Center. She is joined by Deb Greene, the director of BLM's Campbell Creek Science Center and Fran Ulmer, Lt. Governor of Alaska.



Former Spec. Asst. to the Secretary Deborah Williams greets Jinny Kalbach of the Secretary's Office. They worked together for three years.



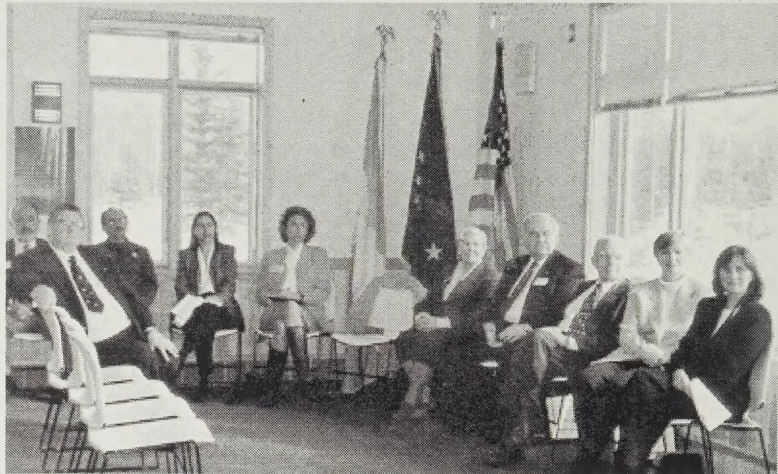
Former BLM State Director Curt McVee visits with Al Kahklen of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.



(l-r) Ron McCoy, a long time employee of the Secretary's office, renews acquaintances with Bish Buckle and Wayne Boden, retired BLM employees who worked with him for many years.



## Dept. of Interior Celebrates 150 Years



The celebration of Interior's 150th birthday brought together many who enjoyed a long relationship with the Department of the Interior. (back, l-r) Niles Cesar, Area Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs; Paul Anderson, Deputy Regional Director, National Park Service; Sally Wisely, acting State Director, Bureau of Land Management; Deborah Williams, former Spec. Asst. to the Secretary; Esther Wunnicke, former Regional Director, Minerals Management Service; Morris Thompson, President and CEO, Doyon, Ltd.; William Sheffield, former Governor of Alaska, Fran Ulmer, lieutenant governor; Marilyn Heiman, Spec. Asst. to the Secretary for Alaska. Front-(left) Ron McCoy. Not pictured- Curt McVee, former BLM Alaska State Director.

On March 3, 1999 the Department of Interior celebrated its 150th anniversary at the Campbell Creek Science Center in Anchorage. Speakers from various federal, state and private agencies reminisced about times in DOI history.

The 80 people who attended the ceremony were the first to view an

interagency mural which will be on display at Alaska federal offices throughout the year.

Special Assistant to the Secretary of the Interior Marilyn Heiman was presented with the first copy of the book, *The Alaska Journey*, which details DOI's 150 years in Alaska. The book was developed especially for the anniversary and all DOI employees will receive a copy.

The theme of the celebration was *Guardians of the Past, Stewards of the Future*. Former Special Assistant to the Secretary Deborah Williams said about the Department's future, "Let's continue to strive for robust tribal governments, healthy ecosystems, and a continued balanced approach to development."



## Trail Work is Never Done says Father of Iditarod

Anyone who has lived in Alaska for any time knows that Joe Redington is the father of the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race. What many people don't know is that he was a long-time member of BLM's Iditarod National Historic Trail Advisory council. Ever since the BLM decided to establish an advisory board in the 1970's to guide its management of the Iditarod National Historic Trail, Joe has been an advisory council member. The council's role was to advise the Secretary, and all Iditarod trail managers and cooperators, in the implementation of the Iditarod Comprehensive Management Plan.

In November 1998, when the council was terminated, Redington and four other council members formed a nonprofit organization called the Iditarod National Historic Trail Inc. (INHT Inc.) to continue working on Iditarod issues. Board members are Redington, Leo Rasmussen and Irene Anderson from Nome, Dan Seavey from Seward and Greg Bill from Wasilla.

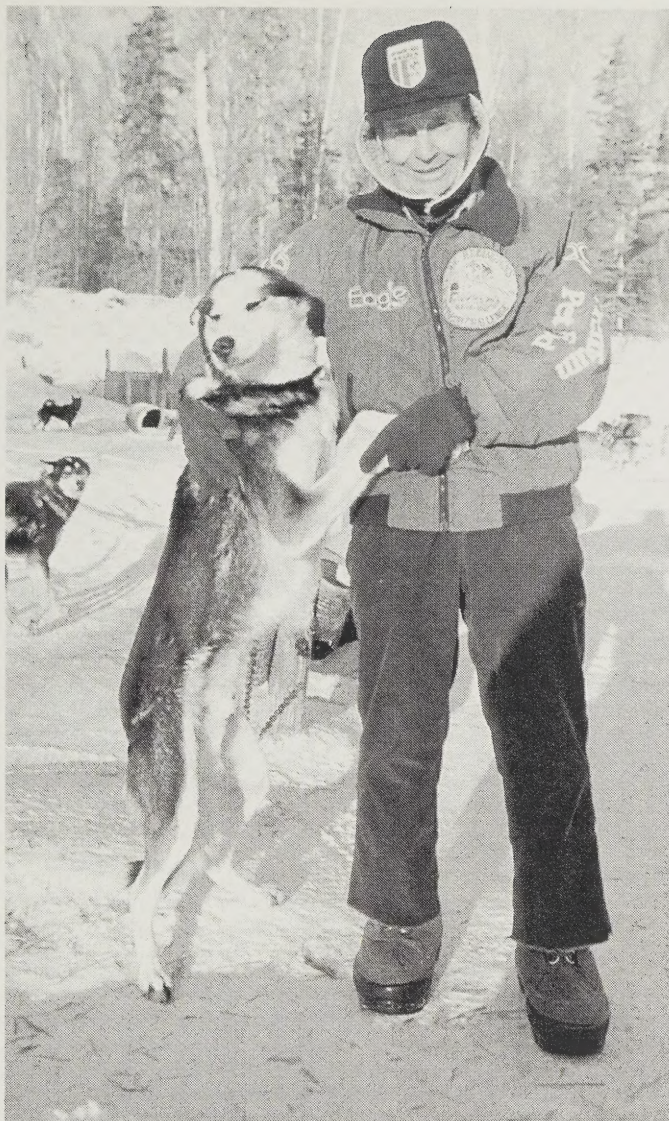
The installation of permanent tripods, marking of trails and the reconstruction of existing structures are priorities. Redington says he'd like to see the historic roadhouses rebuilt, and he'd like to get the trail from Knik to Skwentna back into good shape. "We only use seven miles of the original trail," he says.

It seems like the Iditarod Trail has always been a part of Redington's life. For 50 years, ever since he and his wife Vy homesteaded in Knik where the trail passes, he's been mushing dogs on the Iditarod Trail. In 1956, the Army hired him to mark the trail from Knik to Skwentna.

He says "I identify more with the

trail than I do with the race. . . the race is half of the trail." He says other aspects of the trail are just as important, such as its history and the people who use it.

Redington came from Pennsylvania where in the '50s and '60s "there were beautiful national trails." That's where he got the idea that the Iditarod should become a national trail. He worked with former congressman Mike Gravel to help get the Iditarod a national trail designation.



**Joe Redington with one of the two hundred dogs he kennels at his home off Knik Road outside of Wasilla. Although his days as a member of BLM's Iditarod National Historic Trail Advisory Council are over, he and some former council members continue their association with BLM through the newly formed INHT, Inc., a non-profit corporation devoted to the development of the national trail.**

A cooperative agreement is being developed between INHT Inc. and BLM so the BLM can help fund future projects on the historic trail.

Redington, who is recovering from cancer, is still excited about the trail after all these years. Although he turned 82 this year and didn't run the Iditarod race, next year he plans to race to Nome and continue his association with BLM through his work with INHT, Inc.



# Cool News



Ed Boy

**Robert and Thelma Bowser, volunteers since 1992 at BLM's Yukon Crossing Visitor Contact Center on the Dalton Highway, will receive the 1999 Making A Difference Award for their work.**

**Volunteers to Receive National Award.** Robert and Thelma Bowser, volunteers at BLM's Yukon Crossing Visitor Contact Center since 1992, will receive the 1999 *Making A Difference Award* for outstanding volunteer service.

Since the doors of the Yukon Crossing Visitor Contact Station opened seven years ago, the Bowsers have played an integral part in BLM's public outreach program to travelers along the Dalton Highway. This remote, 500-mile gravel road stretching from Fairbanks to the oil fields of Prudhoe Bay attracts thousands of visitors every summer.

During their first year, the Bowsers set up an information program that provided important safety materials to visitors, and helped them gain a better understanding and respect for the land. Throughout the years they have developed working relationships with Alyeska Pipeline Co., tour

companies and local Native groups. Besides assisting with annual maintenance of the facilities, they initiated an aluminum recycling program, and developed visitor displays of maps, brochures and local artifacts. With initiative and drive, they continue to refine and improve their program to provide even better customer service.

So far the Bowsers have donated more than 8,000 hours of volunteer service worth more than \$112,000.

A national panel of BLM and partner representatives selected 11 outstanding BLM volunteers and three exceptional BLM employees from 52 nominations to receive this year's *Making a Difference* awards. Winners were selected for their exceptional contributions in making a difference in the management of public lands. A special awards ceremony will be held April 20 in Washington, D.C. All travel and accommodations will be provided by BLM.

## **Northern Field Office Gets**

**Kudos** (letter from the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, Sunday, April 4, 1999):

## **Great Job BLM**

I can't express my gratitude enough for the wonderful job the Bureau of Land Management performs in the White Mountain trail and cabin system. We are so lucky to have such a wonderful system and it wouldn't happen had it not been for the BLM and the courteous people who use the cabins and trails. To arrive at a clean, well-maintained cabin at such an affordable price makes for awesome winter outings. Thanks for making my first "full blown" mushing season an incredible experience. Let's keep the system going forever.

—Ken Zaklukiewicz



**Judy Kelley**

**Call her your highness?** Judy Kelley, Conveyances land law assistant, was recently elected new High Priestess to the Waheed Court No.81 Ladies Oriental Shrine. The group supports the philanthropic activities of the Shriners Hospitals for Children, a network of 22 children's orthopedic and burn hospitals that provide medical care to children at no cost.



**Martin Receives Award from Babbitt.** Just before **Suz Martin**, office automation assistant, left BLM last month for a job with the FAA, she went to Washington, D.C. to receive the *Unsung Hero Award* on March 4. The national award recognizes one employee from each Department of Interior



**Suz Martin**

agency who does exemplary work behind the scenes. As BLM's winner, Martin was recognized for the work she'd done on the uniform exchange program, her technical support of the Campbell Tract Facility, and the management and design of a web page. She received her award from Secretary

Bruce Babbitt in the Interior Building and later met President Clinton.

#### **Brewsmasters in our Midst.**

Cadastral survey employees made their presence known at the recent Fur Rendezvous home brew competition. **Steve Schmitt**, land surveyor, **Dave Bieganski**, cartographic technician and **Roger Blouch**, land surveyor took home top honors in a competition with 28 categories ranging from stouts to pale ales. The biggest competitions for home brewers are the Fur Rondy and State Fair. "Anybody can drink it but it's cool to brew," says Schmidt. He and Blouch are certified beer judges.

#### **Surveyor Volunteers at Iditarod Race.**

**Mike Eldridge**, Cadastral surveyor, was a checker at the town of Iditarod during this year's Iditarod Sled Dog Race. Mushers "checked in" with Eldridge before going on to the next race checkpoint. He's been a volunteer for the past four years.

#### **In Memory**

**Bill Athas** died March 5 in Tucson, Arizona from a massive stroke. Athas came to work for BLM-Alaska in 1979 and retired in 1992. His last BLM job was as an administrative branch chief at the Campbell Tract Facility. He was best known for his outgoing personality and the ability to have fun at whatever he was doing. His ashes will be scattered at Nancy Lake in Alaska.

**Gary Cunningham** died March 13 after a lengthy battle with cancer. Gary had worked as a land law examiner in the Div. of Conveyances for seven years. His memorial card best states who Gary was - a wonderful man who lived life and fished with zest and wit. He was buried at the National Cemetery in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

## Don't Go Breaking Your Heart

Do you know the normal blood pressure reading in adults is 120 (systolic pressure) over 80 (diastolic pressure). Anything over that should cause you concern. Why? Many people with elevated blood pressure don't realize that slight hypertension can cause serious damage to your heart. Left untreated, you're looking at the potential for a heart attack or stroke.

Your blood pressure is the force created by the heart when the heart pushes blood through your arteries and circulatory system. Under normal circumstances, small blood vessels or arterioles contract or expand as the blood surges through them. High blood pressure occurs when the arterioles remain constricted.

The first number of your blood pressure reading is the systolic pressure or the pressure of blood flow during heart beats. The second number refers to diastolic which is the pressure between heartbeats.



For most people high blood pressure doesn't show up until later in life. Factors which contribute to this condition include weight gain, sedentary life-style and stress.

The good news is that consistent aerobic exercise, e.g. walking three to five times a week for at least 30 minutes can reduce your blood pressure.

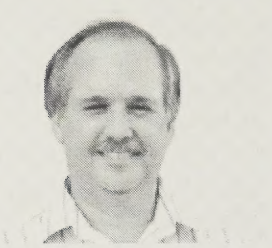
Nutrition can be another factor. Experts say we consume three to 20 times more salt than we need and the excessive use of salt has a strong link to hypertension as found in some studies. Also people with the lowest intake of calcium have a higher risk of hypertension.

Anyone with hypertension should take medication prescribed by a doctor. For those people with borderline or mild hypertension, life-style changes such as diet and exercise will probably do the trick.

**Source: Walking magazine**



# What advise would you give to our new state director?



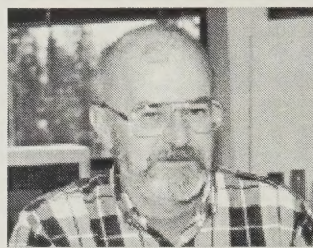
**Roger Baer,**  
Supv. Physical Scientist  
Juneau Mineral Info Ctr

Before issues come piling in on his/her desk, take the opportunity to get out and visit the field offices and various divisions within the state office. Talk to the employees, let them give presentations on their programs. Also talk and meet with our various customer groups.



**Lois Simenson**  
Technical Writer  
Joint Pipeline Office

Get to know your employees throughout BLM-Alaska. There are a lot of us, but we would appreciate your effort. We have an exceptionally hard-working, talented workforce. Many of us have been here a number of years and really know the programs. Spend some time with individuals from all BLM-Alaska programs to get a good sense of the history, the facts, and the extent of the land management issues we work with in our great state.



**Jim Sisk**  
Natural Resource Spec.  
Northern Field Office

Articulate your resource management philosophy to all your workers. Listen to your field managers assessment of the issues and opportunities. Talk with the field manager about the span of control in the Northern Field Office. To grasp distances, lack of road access to over 90% of BLM-administered land, and logistical costs, take the time to travel to the field with staff. Meet with present and potential partners in the private and public sectors, and seek their view of BLM's role in the "eco-tourism" industry.



**Betty Lockard**  
Land Law Examiner  
Div. Conveyance Mgmt.

I think that the State Director needs to come to Alaska with an open mind, willingness to make judgements for him/herself, and a sense of humor.

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## **Alaska People**

Bureau of Land Management  
222 West 7th Avenue, #13  
Anchorage, Alaska 99513-7599  
tele. 907.271.3335

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Danielle Allen

*Editor/Writer/Design/Layout*

## **Photo Manipulation**

Dwayne Richardson  
Charles Luddington  
Jerry Kouzes

## **Contributors**

Sharon Wilson  
Rhea DoBosh  
Andy Williams  
Pam Eldridge  
Ed Bovy

**BLM Library**  
**Denver Federal Center**  
**Bldg. 50, OC-521**  
**P.O. Box 25047**  
**Denver, CO 80225**